

HONORING LAUREN DEBOWES FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN DANCE

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to congratulate Lauren DeBowes for her outstanding achievements as an Irish dancer. A resident of New Haven, she will be representing Connecticut and the United States at the All World Irish Dance Championship in Ennis County Clare, Ireland.

Lauren is one of five young women in her age group from the New England area who will be making the trip to compete at the World Championship. With only 8 years of competitive dance experience under her belt, this is a truly impressive accomplishment. Teamed with her coach, John O'Keefe, Lauren performs both the soft dance and hard shoe dance, both of which have led her to success in several local competitions.

I was a tap dancer when I was young and can recall the thrill of recitals and concerts. I can only imagine the excitement that Lauren is feeling as she prepares for her trip to Ireland. Her hard work, dedication and enthusiasm has put her at a level to compete with the best in the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to Lauren as she celebrates her 16th birthday. This is certainly a special year. It is a pleasure for me to rise today and join with her family, friends, and the New Haven community to honor Lauren DeBowes for her tremendous accomplishments as an Irish dancer. Connecticut and the nation are indeed fortunate to be represented by such a talented young woman.

EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO DECLARATION OF PALESTINIAN STATE

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 16, 1999

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to offer my remarks on both the substance of H. Con. Res. 24 and the context in which it is being considered. The Middle East peace process is at a critical stage, the Oslo Agreement will expire on May 4, 1999 and the legal framework for the peace process will come to an end. Despite the recent breakdown in negotiations, I applaud President Clinton and Secretary of State Albright for their tireless efforts towards achieving a lasting and just peace.

I agree with the majority of the text of H. Con. Res. 24 and therefore I supported it. The final status of the lands controlled by the Palestinian Authority should be determined under the auspices of Oslo or another framework. While Yasser Arafat may have the right to make unilateral declarations after Oslo, it will not be helpful to reaching peace and could inflame the violence that looms over the region every day.

However, I am disturbed by what H. Con. Res. 24 does not say. It does not condemn

the "unilateral actions" taken by Israel in direct violation of Oslo and the Wye River agreements. It ignores the responsibilities and commitments made by the Netanyahu Administration. In short, it is not a balanced resolution.

In the coming months I will continue to support the Administration's efforts in the Middle East and offer my support for all those who truly seek peace in the region. I will also work with my colleagues in the House to craft more balanced resolutions that call on both sides to adhere to the letter and spirit of their commitments.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO EXPAND THE TAX DEDUCTION FOR STUDENT LOAN INTEREST PAYMENTS: ELIMINATING THE 60-PAYMENT RESTRICTION

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation on behalf of myself, and Representatives JOHNSON (of Connecticut), MATSUI, and ENGLISH, to expand the student loan interest payment tax deduction.

As a college education becomes both increasingly expensive and increasingly important in getting a job and being a productive and active participant in our democratic society, we must continue to look for ways to help students pay for tuition and related educational expenses.

As a part of the Tax Payer Relief Act of 1997, the interest paid on student loans became eligible for an "above-the-line" deduction on Federal income taxes. This tax provision is just beginning to provide needed relief to many student borrowers.

However, under current law, only the first 60 loan payments are eligible for the deduction. Because student loan payments are typically made monthly, this means that students can deduct interest payments on their taxes for only 5 years of repayment, not including time periods spent in either forbearance or deferment.

Our legislation would simply lift the 60-payment restriction and allow borrowers to deduct interest payments for the entire period of repayment.

Extending the time limit on the tax deduction is one of the most direct and straightforward changes we can make in current law to relieve the increasing burden of student loan debt. Loans now comprise 60 percent of all postsecondary student aid, compared to just 45 percent 10 years ago.

Our legislation will be particularly helpful to students with high loan debt and those who choose to pay over longer periods. The latter group includes those who choose "income contingent repayment," that is those who make smaller payments over a longer period of time, especially those who maintain a commitment to lower-paying public service occupations.

Eliminating the 60 payment period also will ease difficult, confusing, and costly reporting requirements currently required for both borrowers and lenders. Thus far, these reporting

requirements have proved so difficult that the IRS has already relaxed the rules for reporting during the 1998 tax year.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this important legislation.

EXCELLENCE REWARDED AT BURBANK HIGH SCHOOL

HON. CRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the academic decathlon team members, coaches, and parents at Burbank High School in my hometown, San Antonio, Texas. At the state Academic Decathlon competition for medium-size schools, Burbank placed third among 225 Texas high schools. This great accomplishment reflects the hard work and countless hours of preparation by students and school officials alike.

These students have demonstrated exceptional time management skills, self-discipline, and determination. They stayed focused on their priorities and set high standards for themselves. The City of San Antonio is proud of all nine members who received 14 individual medals in addition to the third-place team medal. Included in the team award was a gold medallion and a \$250 scholarship for each team member.

I would like to thank the coaches and parents of these diligent students for all their efforts in making this accomplishment possible. These students have been successful because of their hard work and support from family and teachers. They are paving the way to a bright and exciting future.

A TRIBUTE TO ST. JOSEPH'S VILLAGE IN SELDEN, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this historic chamber to share with my colleagues the story of St. Joseph's Village in Selden, Long Island, New York. On Saturday, March 20, 1999, this special community, built by the Diocese of Rockville Center, will celebrate the 20th anniversary of its ground breaking. I stand here today in the People's House to talk about St. Joseph's Village because it embodies a unique spirit of community and cooperation; where its residents help each other and work to improve the lives of those in the surrounding community—even the world.

This Saturday evening, I have the privilege of helping the community pay tribute to a community within a community; St. Joseph's Village. Since its inception, 20 years ago, its 200 residents have made noteworthy contributions to an array of causes, from national charities to local food and clothing drives, and have improved the lives of individuals from around the world and at home on Long Island.

St. Joseph's Village began as an experiment. It was the first subsidized senior and